GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
WATER RESOURCES
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:253
ANSWERED ON:13.08.2007
PURIFIED DRINKING WATER
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Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether thousands of habitations in different States are identified as having water sources contaminated by chemicals like iron, arsenic, fluoride, nitrates, sulphates and other salts;

(b) if so, the details of such habitations State-wise; and

(c) the measures being taken to provide safe drinking water to these habitations?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAI PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV)

(a)&(b) As per available information, ground water in major parts of the country is by and large potable. There are, however, areas which have poor quality of ground water mainly due to contamination from ground water bearing rocks, excessive use of fertilizers, industrial and domestic effluents, mining wastes, saline water ingress etc. The Central Ground Water Board (CGWB), during its surveys and studies of the contamination of ground water have revealed that arsenic and fluoride are the main geogenic contaminants. As per the information provided by Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), the names of the districts of some States where ground water has been found contaminated and reasons thereof are given in the enclosed Annexure.

(c) `Water` being a State subject, it is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments to take steps to check ground water pollution. However, the Union Government has also taken following measures to mitigate the problem of ground water pollution:-

(i) The CGWB drills arsenic free wells in the arsenic affected areas and provides technical guidance for clearing of source of drinking water in arsenic affected areas. It also conducts mass awareness programmes and water management training programmes in these areas and carries out research to understand the origin and distribution of arsenic in ground water for adopting long term remedial measures.

(ii) The Union Ministry of Rural Development (Department of Drinking Water Supply) under the Rajiv Gandhi National Drinking Water Mission provides financial and technical assistance to States through a Centrally Sponsored Scheme, namely Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP) for provision of safe drinking water to the rural population as per the stipulated norms. In order to provide focussed attention to tackle water quality problems, Sub-Mission guidelines under ARWSP have been revised in February, 2006, wherein, 20% of ARWSP funds is retained at the Centre and released to States on need-basis.

(iii) To ensure safe drinking water supply to all the urban population of the country, the Ministry of Urban Development have launched two new programmes, viz. Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) and Urban Infrastructure Development Scheme for Small and Medium Towns (UIDSSMT), to provide infrastructure facilities to 5161 urban towns of the country. The project envisages to provide safe drinking water to every citizen of India within a time frame of 7 years.

(iv) Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), under the Ministry of Environment & Forests has adopted several measures like directing the industries through State Pollution Control Boards to limit the discharge of effluents within the stipulated standards, initiation of schemes to give assistance to clusters of small scale industrial units for setting up common effluent treatment plants for implementation of a scheme for monitoring of water quality in the critically polluted areas.